

**Dr. Peterson**

**LGBTQIA Resource Center Grand Opening**

4 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 27, 2014, Atrium of the Flag Building

Good afternoon, and welcome to this grand opening for Georgia Tech's new LGBTQIA Resource Center. We should note that although we're here today for this special celebration, the Center has actually been open since April 1, which was also the day that Aby started with us here at Georgia Tech. We should also point out that the Center's website is up and running at [LGBTQIA.gatech.edu](http://LGBTQIA.gatech.edu).

Just a few facts about our new Center:

Georgia Tech is the 4th school in Georgia to open such a Center. We join Emory, UGA, and Kennesaw State.

Our Center is a joint endeavor between the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Institute Diversity. In addition, our office has been a strong advocate of LGBTQIA inclusion at Georgia Tech, and that advocacy will be ongoing.

The Center will primarily serve students but will also be a resource for faculty and staff. It will be an active place, engaging the campus community in educational programs, celebrations of LGBTQIA accomplishments, and culture transformation to ensure that people of all genders and sexual identities feel respected and affirmed.

Our goal is to create a campus environment where our LGBTQIA students, faculty, staff, and alumni feel safe, and so the Center's programs will include outreach to allies as well. Located in Atlanta, Georgia Tech is in a prime position to really work with and make an impact on the surrounding area and be a crucial part of the city's broader LGBTQIA community.

Our students, faculty, staff, and alumni have been eagerly awaiting this Center for a

long time. Students and alumni especially have said that there was a real need for this Center so that LGBTQIA students here felt welcomed and valued. Many other schools have Centers, including some of our peer institutions, and it was important that Georgia Tech took this step to really show its commitment to inclusive excellence. The Center came about because many different groups and individuals pushed for it for a long time.

Georgia Tech has done some impressive work so far for the LGBTQIA community, such as launching a Safe Space program in 2001, implementing inclusive policies such as gender-inclusive bathrooms in new buildings around campus, and offering some domestic partner benefits to faculty, staff, and students, but there is still a long way to go.

We know that our students don't always feel safe on campus and that there is a need for education around these issues at every level of the Institute. This Center is a big step in the right direction, and it's important that everyone gets behind it.

Thank you very much for your attendance today. I hope you'll come back often to the LGBTQIA Resource Center and that you'll tap into the services it offers. Now we'll hear from some other members of the Georgia Tech community on this happy occasion, and then it's on to the ribbon cutting!